

News and Information

from the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs

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TENNESSEE DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, AARP WARN OF POSSIBLE "SCAM" INVOLVING LIVING TRUSTS

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) have issued a warning to Tennessee residents about a possible "scam" involving the sale of living trust packages allegedly endorsed by AARP.

According to Division Director Mark Williams and AARP Consumer Representative Steve Melman, a number of Tennessee seniors have reported being contacted by living trust salespersons falsely claiming to be associated with or endorsed by AARP. In most cases, the seniors had responded to an ad or letter offering "free" information on probate. When they sent for the information, their names were sold to local Tennessee companies that prepare and sell living trust documents.

Williams cautioned residents to be wary of the sales pitches of door-to-door sales persons selling living trusts. "Before spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars on a living trust package you may not really need, you should consult a licensed and experienced estate planning attorney or financial planner," he advised.

Melman warned that many of these salespersons allude to an outdated AARP study on probate and that some imply AARP endorsement of their products. "The fact is that AARP does not sell or endorse living trust products, nor does it work cooperatively with any company that markets or endorses such documents," he said. "And we do not employ door-to-door representatives to sell or provide information on our health or casualty insurance, pharmacy services, or any other member program or benefit."

AARP has a free booklet on wills and trusts available. Write to: Consumer Representative, AARP, 999 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 1650, Atlanta, GA 30309.

If you have encountered such a scam, you may file a consumer complaint with the Division. Call 800.342.8385 (in TN) or write: Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243.